The advantages to be secured by the adoption of improved cultural methods are being successfully demonstrated on ryots' lands in almost all important agricultural centres. Special attention is being devoted to the distribution of selected seeds and the popularisation of scientific manures. There are at present 10 departmental depôts and 40 depôts managed by private persons and co-operative societies, as also two private companies, engaged in the sale of scientific manures. Five bulletins and 13 leaflets on agricultural subjects have been issued by the department during the past four years. The scheme for the award of grants for the maintenance of breeding bulls, brought into force from Kumbhom, 1096, continues to be popular, and the keepers of 72 such bulls received grants in 1099.

15. The school for training students in rug and carpet making, opened in the farm at Trivandrum on the 1st Edavam, 1098, continues to work satisfactorily. The first batch of students completed their course in the school in Medam last and a second batch of ten students are now undergoing training. About fifty youths have been trained in silk-worm rearing and silk-reeling, and arrangements have just been completed to assign a small block of land each to them in the Nedumangad taluk to enable them to raise the mulberry plant. The Agricultural Middle School, experimentally established at Alwaye towards the close of 1097, continues to be popular and its term has been extended. The school has been opened with the object of imparting instruction in the elements of practical farming to students who propose to pursue agriculture as a profession in after-life, and with the workshop attached to it affords training in the manufacture and repair of most of the common agricultural tools and implements. The final examination of the first batch of students trained in the institution was conducted in Medam last, and a second batch of students have been admitted for training. The buildings for the location of the second Agricultural Middle School, proposed to be opened at Kottarakara, are in progress and are expected to be completed in time to admit of the school being opened in 1101.

16. With a view to exercise better supervision over the work of veterinary officers, the Senior Veterinary Inspector was appointed as the assistant to the Director of Agriculture in veterinary matters, and all the veterinary institutions in the State were, with effect from the 1st Tulam, 1099, brought under his immediate control. Though the number of veterinary institutions has risen only from 11 to 12 during the past four years, the number of in-patients and out-patients treated in them has risen from 6,573 to 9,703. A beginning has been made in the current year to encourage approved private veterinary physicians by the award of grants-in-aid.

17. The number of fish-curing yards has increased from 3 in 1096 to 9 in 1099 and one more has since been added to that number. The fisher-folk have begun to appreciate the advantages of controlled fish-curing and are clamouring for more yards.

18. Agricultural Loans. In my address to the members of the eighteenth session of the Assembly, I mentioned the several directions in which the rules under the Land Improvement and Agricultural Loans Regulation, which had till then been practically a dead letter, were revised, with a view to make agricultural loans popular. The procedure relating to enquiries on applications for loans was simplified, the powers of the land revenue officers in the matter of grant of loans were enhanced, encumbrance certificates in regard to property offered as security were exempted from search fees, provision was made for the grant of loans in certain cases on personal security alone, and a system of convenient equated repayments of both principal and interest was introduced. These measures are bearing increased fruit. As against a handful of applications for loans received prior to the adoption of the revised provisions in 1096, 474 applications were received in 1097, 452 in 1098, and 356 in 1099, the amounts of the loans sanctioned during these three years being Rs. 96,236, Rs. 92,534 and Rs. 1,27,892 respectively. Of the 174 applications sanctioned in 1099, it is gratifying to note that all except three related to loans of Rs. 2,000 and below, which shows that the benefits of these rules are reaching the less wealthy agriculturists for whom they are mainly intended. Orders have been issued to the effect that applications for loans from well-to-do land-owners, who are in a position to raise money

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by loans in the open market or by other means, should not be encouraged. The rate of interest on these loans has been reduced from 6¼ per cent. to 6 per cent. per annum from the current year as a further measure of encouragement.

19. Forests. The net revenue from 'forests' has risen from Rs. 3,55,375 in 1098 to Rs. 5,70,911 in 1099; but the timber market continues to be very dull and no correct forecast can yet be made of our forest finance. The stock of timber in the depôts has been brought down, by a careful regulation of fellings, from 12,61,889 cubic feet at the close of 1096 to 7,06,239 cubic feet at the close of 1099; and efforts have not been spared to secure advantageous offers for timber that is likely to deteriorate through long keeping and exposure.

20. Deputy Conservator Mr. K. S. Narayana Aiyangar, who was working as Forest Utilisation Officer during 1099, explored several avenues for the discovery of fresh markets for the disposal of our surplus timber, and negotiations are in progress which are likely to materialise in the probable disposal of our surplus building timbers and of our soft woods the bulk of which is now going to waste. Mr. Narayana Aiyangar investigated also the uses of several species of soft woods and minor forest produce which are not now put to any use; and his survey of reed-growing areas in the Pattanapuram taluk has resulted in the reeds in an area near the Punalur Paper Mills being leased to the management of those Mills. The idea of a rope-way from Ramakkal Mettu for the easy transport of the timber of the Kallar valley on the High Ranges to the Madura plains is under examination and should, if feasible, make the extraction of timber from that valley more attractive and profitable.

21. In my last year's address, I stated how, by the opening of a temporary Forest College at Quilon to train a large number of Rangers and Deputy Rangers, the efficiency of the superior executive staff was enhanced; and I also referred to the opening of a school at Konni, in Kumbham, 1099, for the training of Forest Guards. Two batches of Forest Guards have already been trained in this latter institution and a third batch are being now trained.

22. The *taungya* system of teak plantation, introduced for the first time in 1096, under which the area proposed for plantation is leased for a year or two for the alternate cultivation of paddy and cereals in return for clearing the ground and planting and rearing thereon teak stumps supplied by the department, has been found to be both popular and economical. Since the introduction of this system, the cost of planting teak per acre has gone down from Rs. 20·9 in 1096 to Rs. 2·6 in 1099; and when it is remembered that the area freshly planted is nearly 600 acres per year, the economy secured will be found to be not inconsiderable.

23. Some efforts have recently been made to train the water-ways in North and Central Travancore, so essential for the cheap transport not of timber only but of other merchandise as well. These efforts, however, being neither adequate nor systematic, the Government have sanctioned the deputation of an experienced Executive Engineer for investigating the problem of river navigation in the State and suggesting measures for its improvement.

24. As many as 17 important reserves have been pending settlement for a long term of years and it has been found from experience that the Division Peishkars are unable to attend to the work of Forest Settlement along with their other multifarious duties. In view to the importance of avoiding further delay in the settlement of these reserves in the interests of forest conservancy, the Government have decided to get this work done by the Superintendent of Survey as soon as his additional duties in connection with the ensuing Legislative Council elections are over; and it is hoped that the long-delayed settlement of these reserves will be completed by this officer with promptitude.

25. The committee appointed by the Government in 1098 to enquire into the question of giving full proprietary rights over royal trees standing on registered holdings to the owners thereof has completed its labours and its report is shortly expected.

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